

Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) Program Guidelines and Application Instructions 2020





**Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP)
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2020**

Application Due: January 8, 2021

[How to Apply Webinars: December 9th 2:00 p.m. and 17th 9:30 a.m. \(Mandatory\)](#)



Purpose

Governor Northam and the Virginia General Assembly have made reducing evictions a policy priority for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Governor Northam signed Executive Order 25 in November 2018 which made reducing the rate of evictions a housing priority for state agencies. Recognizing the benefits of eviction reduction efforts, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed a budget during the 2020 Special Session, allocating \$3.3 million to implement the Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP). The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) was directed to design and implement the pilot.

The purpose of this pilot program is to create a local/regional coordinated systems approach to effectively prevent evictions. When evictions cannot be prevented, the system must also include how to divert evictions once the household has received an unlawful detainer. The systems approach will include creating a collective impact model where organizations that serve as a safety-net within the community collaborate to ensure households have early access to resources to stabilize their housing situations.

For the purposes of this pilot, eviction *prevention* services are provided to households *before* they are issued unlawful detainers when courts get involved. Prevention services generally involve short-term financial assistance along with case management to ensure the household is connected to needed resources that stabilize the housing situation.

Eviction *diversion* services are provided after households are issued unlawful detainers and usually involve assisting with the negotiation process between landlords and tenants in outlining the terms of payment plans to address past due rent and fees. Typically, the further along in the eviction process a household gets, the further in debt the household becomes. Therefore, the primary focus of this pilot is to demonstrate what assistance and services are most beneficial to prevent a household from going to court as well as the timing of the provision of assistance.

Background

Evictions are involuntary residential moves initiated by the property owners or managers. These are due to the nonpayment of rent, lease violations, the end of lease term, other issues between the landlord and the tenant, or a change in property use. Relative to the rest of the country, Virginia has a high rate of evictions per capita.

Evictions result in housing instability with negative impacts on overall financial well-being for a household, educational outcomes for individuals, and community health, making it essential that Virginia find a solution to reduce its overall rate of evictions.

In 2016, Matthew Desmond, a professor of sociology at Princeton University, released his examination of eviction in America in his book, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. His work with the Eviction Lab to collect and analyze national eviction data dating back to 2000 identified areas of the country with the highest eviction rates. Many large cities with the highest eviction rates are located in the Southeast. Five out of the top ten evicting cities in America are located in Virginia: Richmond, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk and Chesapeake. Petersburg has the second highest eviction rate for a mid-sized city. Localities in Virginia with higher eviction rates tend to have a higher percentage of rental units and more cost burdened renters.

In 2020, Virginia and the rest of the country face high levels of housing insecurity due to the COVID pandemic. Virginia has responded to this crisis, in part, by providing rent and mortgage assistance through the Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program (RMRP). Localities have also utilized federal and local funds to create their own rent relief efforts administered locally and focused on pandemic response. While RMRP and local efforts seek to address housing insecurity due to the COVID pandemic, the goal of this pilot is to address systemic issues impacting housing insecurity and rate of evictions in Virginia.

Funding Level

The Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) has been allocated \$3.3 million, which includes \$300,000 for DHCD staffing to implement eviction prevention and diversion efforts. DHCD will award the full \$3 million in grant funds available for a February 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021 contract period to provide direct prevention and diversion assistance through local grantees selected through a competitive application process. DHCD anticipates providing grants for up to 7 grantees with a possible second year renewal. DHCD reserves the right to adjust funding level and grant period based on availability of funds.

Geographic Targeting

The VERP is available statewide through a competitive application process. Applicants proposing to serve one or more of the following Virginia localities will be given a scoring preference because of their high eviction rates and/or their inclusion in the [General Assembly created pilot diversion program](#):

- Danville
- Hampton
- Norfolk
- Petersburg
- Richmond
- Chesapeake

- Newport News

DHCD will fund only one grantee per locality. Local pilot activities must be coordinated with all local eviction prevention and diversion efforts. Applications not coordinated with other local efforts are ineligible.

Applicants are encouraged to apply in partnership with the key eviction prevention and diversion efforts in their locality and to share grant resources to achieve pilot outcomes. Grantees may serve multiple localities. Any partnerships or collaborations must be reflected in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or agreement to be submitted for DHCD approval.

Type of Assistance

Pilot funds are grants to local organizations selected through a competitive application process. DHCD provides funds issued through contracts on a reimbursement basis with a possible second year renewal based on the availability of funds and grantee performance.

Local Match

This program does not require a match, however applications that include local match contributions (both in-kind and cash match) will be given a scoring preference per the state budget directive. Local COVID or other emergency resources do not count toward a local match commitment.

Applicants Eligibility

Applicants must be a nonprofit or unit of local government with a proven history of meeting the needs of lower-income households through the provision of financial assistance and housing support programs and with the existing capacity to successfully implement the pilot program. Please note that institutions of higher education may apply in collaboration with a local nonprofit or unit of local government.

Applicants with outstanding audit findings, IRS findings, DHCD monitoring findings or other compliance issues will not be considered for the pilot. Please note that although DHCD will work with all interested parties, where appropriate, to resolve findings and compliance issues, it will be the responsibility of the applicant to assure good standing.

All applicants must be registered in DHCD's Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS) and are required to submit one of the following financial documents: Financial Statement; Reviewed Financial Statement prepared by an independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA); Audited Financial Statement prepared by an

independent CPA; or, an OMB A-133 Audit (Single Audit) prepared by an independent CPA. See the table below to determine which document your organization is required to submit.

The threshold requirements outlined below are the minimal standards required by DHCD. All organizations funded by DHCD are encouraged to undertake the highest level of financial management review to ensure practices and procedures are fully examined and evaluated.

Threshold Requirement	Document
Total annual expenditures \leq \$100,000, regardless of source	Financial Statement prepared by organization (does not require preparation by a CPA)
Total annual expenditure between \$100,001 and \$300,000, regardless of source	Reviewed Financial Statement prepared by an Independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
Total annual expenditures $>$ \$300,000, regardless of source	Audited Financial Statement prepared by an Independent CPA
Federal expenditures \geq \$750,000	2 CFR 200 Subpart F Audit - prepared by an Independent CPA

Entities shall file the required financial document in the Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS) within nine (9) months after the end of their fiscal year or 30 days after it has been accepted (Reviewed Financial Statement, Audited Financial Statement, and OMB A-133 Audit only) - whichever comes first.

The full DHCD Audit Policy, including an explanation of the specific document requirements, can be found online at <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/Docx/audit-policy/dhcd-financial-statement-audit-policy-2019.pdf>.

Subgrantees are allowable with VERP. Any applicable agreements or Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) must be submitted with the application for this pilot and are subject to DHCD approval.

DHCD will contract with the grantee only. Grantees are held fully responsible for all reporting, submission of remittances, and maintaining all source documentation and program records. Grantees must monitor subgrantee program compliance, and all state and federal requirements.

At least one representative of the organization must attend one of two “How to Apply” webinars in order to be considered minimally eligible to apply for VERP.

Pilot Program Design

The goal of VERP is to support local efforts to meet the specific needs of households that are experiencing housing instability and are at-risk of being evicted.

Grantees must include individuals with lived experience in the design and decision-making process, adopt a tool for targeting assistance, and development policies and procedures to be approved by DHCD.

Evictions and housing instability have disproportionately impacted households of color. Pilot programs must be designed to address racial equity.

Lived Experience

All programs must provide opportunity for an individual with lived experience (previously evicted or experienced housing instability) to be involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the local VERP project and any input must be implemented to the extent that it is appropriate for the program and feasible within statutory and regulatory guidelines.

Targeted Assistance

DHCD requires grantees to adopt an assessment tool designed to identify those households most at risk of housing instability and to have clear policies and procedures that specify household eligibility and program approach including type and amount of assistance based on assessment scores.

Assessment criteria should include factors such as:

- Household headed by a person of color
- Single female head of household
- Number of recent moves within the past 12 months
- Age of the head of household and presence of children
- Involvement of child services or foster care
- Non-leaseholder status
- Domestic violence
- Frequency of law enforcement involvement at the unit
- Tenants living in large multi-family properties
- Housing cost burden

Policies and procedures must be approved by DHCD.

Eligible Activities

All payments must be made to third parties, not the program participant.

Eligible VERP expenses include:

- Housing Financial Assistance
- Stabilization Support Services
- Case Management and Supportive Services
- Administrative Costs

Housing Financial Assistance

Funds may be used to prevent or divert program participant households from experiencing eviction. Eligible expenses include:

- Short-term (up to six months) rent assistance
- Ongoing rent contributions
- Rent and utility arrears
- Security deposits, moving expenses, application fees
- Utilities assistance

Stabilization Support Service

Funds may be used to help households achieve a greater level of housing security.

Eligible expenses include:

- Work supports (i.e. training costs; transportation assistance – bus tokens, ride sharing, auto repair; childcare costs)
- Legal services

Case Management

Funds may be used for staffing expenses related to the provision of case management and other supportive services to meet the needs of program participant households.

Eligible costs include:

- Case management
- Housing counseling
- Landlord outreach and negotiation

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs may include accounting for the use of grant funds, preparing reports for submission to DHCD, obtaining program audits, data collection and reporting, similar costs related to administering the grant after the award, and

associated staff salaries. Administrative costs also include staff training for program and case management

VERP funding must be coordinated with other available funding sources. Funds may not be used to replace mainstream resources. There is a statewide funding source for rental assistance, the Virginia RMRP that specifically addresses housing insecurity due to the COVID pandemic. VERP funds must be coordinated with RMRP. The grantee shall not duplicate assistance. Grantees should not use pilot resources where other resources are available, i.e. if there is an eviction diversion program currently in the community, grantees should not develop another eviction diversion program, but can strengthen that component of local delivery efforts and assist in funding that type of program in conjunction with eviction prevention effort.

Grantee must coordinate with any local court-based eviction diversion program. Local advisory committees are expected to coordinate resources, problem solve system level issues, and address other challenges related to the prevention and diversion of evictions. Grantees and their Local VERP Advisory Committee will work with DHCD to conduct focus groups with landlord and tenant stakeholders to receive input on determining what components the local eviction prevention system should include.

Grantees that own housing units must not use pilot funds for rental assistance in any units owned by the grantee or a subsidiary. Grantees must consult with DHCD for how best to address the needs of tenants living in any grantee owned units.

Local VERP Advisory Committee

Each grantee is required to have significant local coordination through a local advisory committee that will be established by the grantee for the purpose of this program and must include representatives from the following:

- Local CoC
- Workforce Development
- Local DSS
- Legal Aid
- Representative of Public Housing Authority
- Representative of Associations representing landlords such as Realtors and Apartment Management Associations
- Housing Counseling Agency/Program
- Conflict Resolution (Alternate Dispute Resolution)
- Person with lived experience of eviction or housing insecurity

- Organizations representing communities of color
- Tenant advocacy groups (if present in the community)
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

Outreach and Engagement

Each grantee will work with its Local VERP Advisory Committee to develop an Outreach and Engagement Plan to ensure households at higher risk of eviction are made aware of the VERP Pilot. Each grantee must ensure information about its services provided through the pilot are included in 2-1-1 VIRGINIA's database of resources.

Data Collection

Virginia lacks a statewide, real-time understanding of evictions across the commonwealth. Access to statewide eviction data is important for understanding current eviction trends and measuring the impact of an eviction prevention and diversion program. Grantees will work closely with DHCD to develop and implement a local or regional process to collect eviction data.

VERP Evaluation

Prior to implementing VERP services, the grantee will work with DHCD to create a pilot evaluation tool and process that assesses the impact of the grantee's program and the overall effectiveness of the pilot.

Application Process

Applications will be accepted on or before January 8, 2021. All applications must be submitted to DHCD through the online application and project management system called [CAMS](#) (Centralized Application and Management System). Please allow for up to two business days for responses to any CAMS help desk request. Applications must be submitted in CAMS on or before 11:59 PM, January 8, 2021.

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed by a DHCD panel and scored based on the local need (40 points), program approach (30 points), and grantee capacity (30 points). Applications must score at least 60 points to be considered for funding.

Pilot Application Evaluation Criteria		
<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Scoring Elements</i>	<i>Max. Points</i>
Need	Pre-pandemic rate of evictions; targeted localities (see page 3)	40
Approach	Assessment tool; equity measures; inclusions of person with lived experience; policies and procedures; Advisory committee; best practices; local collaboration; pilot components; local match	30
Capacity	Experience serving low-income households and providing financial assistance	30
TOTAL –must score at least 60 points.		100

Please note that DHCD technical assistance is limited to normal business hours.

Application Submission

VERP applications must be submitted through DHCD's [Centralized Application and Management System](#) (CAMS). Applicants should carefully follow all instructions for submission. Applications submitted with incorrect or missing information will be reviewed "as is."

An applicant organization must have a registered CAMS organizational profile in order to apply for pilot funding. Once an organization has an approved profile, individual users may be given access to CAMS by the organization's profile manager.

Applicants may submit applications at any time prior to the deadline. DHCD will only review applications submitted in CAMS prior to the established deadline.

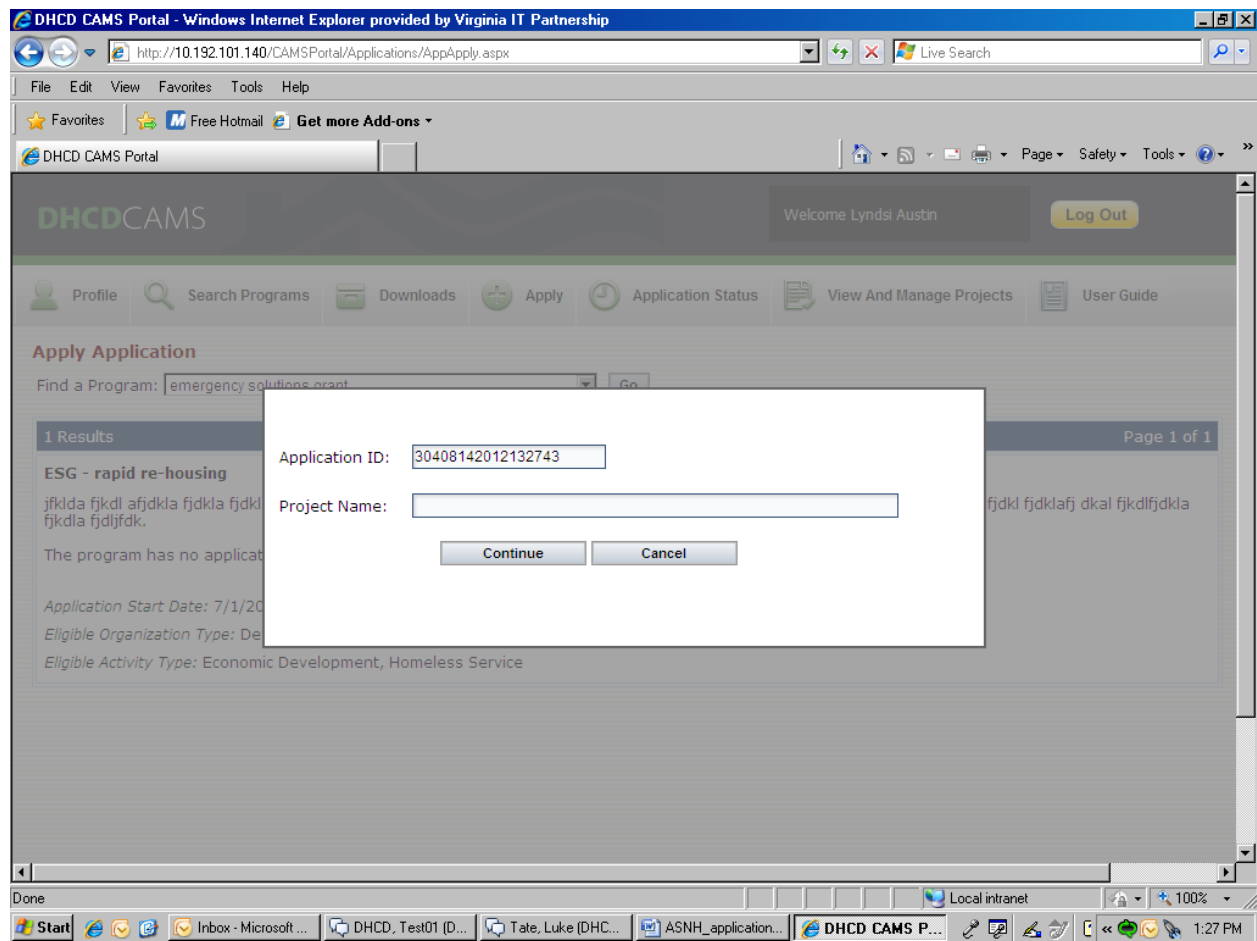
CAMS will send the applicant an email notification when an application has been submitted and received.

All work in CAMS should be frequently saved. Please note that Chrome is the recommended browser.

Project Information

The applicant must login to CAMS and select the VERP application and apply. When the applicant clicks on Apply the system will ask for a Project Name. Please be careful to enter a project name that will help DHCD identify your project. Once the applicant hits

Continue the project name cannot be edited. At this point CAMS will give the application a system-generated Application ID number.



Select Continue and CAMS will take the applicant to the Project Information tab. On the project information tab the Organization Name will be pre-populated based on the organization's profile. Please note, any errors or needed updates to the organizational profile must be made by the individual who is set up as a profile manager for your organization.

On the project information tab the applicant must enter the Project Primary Contact information. This is the name of the individual DHCD should contact with questions about the project and their contact information.

Place of Primary Performance is where that project (main office or service location) will be located and the Primary Service Area is the locality (ies) (one or more) that the project is intended to target.

Please note that at this point the page will display a 'Print' option at the top right-hand corner. The 'Print' function will produce a PDF that can be printed or saved. This will have any information that you have entered and saved in the application.

Tip: To print an application that will display all the questions simply go into the "Narrative Information" tab and enter NA into each text box. This will allow you to have a copy of the application including all the narrative questions to work from outside of CAMS.

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Application Submission [Print](#)

Application ID: 34305292012094938 Project Name: HPP Test kld 5/29 Program Name: HPP
 Application Start Date: 05/01/2012 Application End Date: 07/31/2012

Project Information **Project Budget** **Narrative Information** **Attachments** **Additional Information**

Project Information You must click the "Save" button below to save the info you enter in the page!

Organization Name*:

Project Primary Contact [?](#)

First Name*: Last Name*:
 Title*: Email*:
 Work Phone*: - -

Place of Primary Performance [?](#)

Address*: Zip Code*: - [Whats my +4?](#)
 City/County*:

Primary Service Area [?](#)

Please select ALL localities that will be in your project's primary service area. Only one County, City or Town must be selected to save this page. Select the Add/Edit link to make changes. Selections will display below the County, City and Town sections. When selecting a County, it is not necessary to also select a Town that lies within that county. Consult the application information for this program for additional information.

County: [Add/Edit County](#) City: [Add/Edit City](#) Town: [Add/Edit Town](#)
 No County Selected. No City Selected. No Town Selected.

[Save](#)

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Project Budget

The next tab Project Budget requires some basic budget information. Please note for VCI this information corresponds to the requested amount and activity type. Please enter the amount of requested pilot funds in the DHCD Request box and the match amount in the Other Funding text box.

☐ -Provide supportive housing options for persons with disabilities
☐ -Assure integrated community housing for persons with disabilities that aid the state's response to the Department of Justice Settlement
☐ -Other – Clearly state the housing policy this project will impact

This response should explain how the proposed project will address one of the identified state priority housing policies. Direct impact on a priority housing policy is a key factor in the evaluation.

☐ Local Priorities. Describe how this project fits in with local and regional priorities, including how this project was identified, how it aligns with local comprehensive plans, and how the project is supported by the community.
 Describe and document the local housing need, demand and target population that this project will address.

This response should provide specific information on the housing needs, demand and target population that this project will address. The response should describe the type of need that will be met and quantify the level of need. The targeted population should be clearly described and their need for this type of housing should be quantified. Cite marketing studies and other documentation if available. Please attach a copy of any demand studies, marketing plans, and other relevant documentation demonstrating the need and demand associated with this project. For homeownership projects, be sure to include documentation demonstrating a pool of qualified and interested homebuyers. A list of pre-qualified candidates is recommended.

Explain how the project will address the identified state priority housing policy.

Project Information Project Budget **Narrative Information** Attachments Additional Information

Please answer following questions:

Provide a summary of the project, including location, intended beneficiaries and outcomes, and why this project is a priority for the community. Include characteristics that are important to understand the proposed project, such as physical features, land use patterns, demographics, proposed activities including those that will be funded with other resources, but that are integrally related to the Trust Fund activities. Delineate which activities are proposed for Trust Fund funding and which activities will be funded with other resources.

Which of the state housing priorities will this project impact? Describe how the proposed project activities will impact this housing policy. Quantify where possible.

State housing priorities include:

- Reduce the cost of homeownership
- Expand permanent housing for households experiencing homelessness
- Provide supportive housing options for persons with disabilities
- Assure integrated community housing for persons with disabilities that aid the state's response to the Department of Justice Settlement
- Other – Clearly state the housing policy this project will impact

This response should explain how the proposed project will address one of the identified state priority housing policies. Direct impact on a priority housing policy is a key factor in the evaluation.

☐ Project Costs. Describe how project costs were determined—entity that derived costs, when, methodology. What assurances can be made to ensure the project is sized and scaled appropriately? Has any value-engineering been completed to explore cost savings?
 Please list each entity involved in the project and describe the role they will play in project implementation and the experience they have in performing that role in other projects.
☐ Each entity involved in the project should be listed along with the role they will have in the proposed project, such as owner, developer, property manager, service provider etc. Outline the experience each entity has in carrying out such a role in other projects. Rental projects are expected to function over 20 years and the involved entities must have the capacity to fulfill their responsibilities for this timeframe.

CLOSE X

Next Preview Save

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Specific narrative questions and instructions are as follows:

1. Tell us about the eviction rates and local needs for the locality(ies) that your proposed program would serve.
2. Describe your organization's approach to reducing evictions and improving housing stability.
3. Tell us about how you will target these resources. Please include information about any assessment tool and/or factors that you will be using.
4. Tell us about how you will provide outreach, in general, and to households of color and how you will assure equitable access to these resources.
5. Tell us about the case management and supportive services your program will provide.
6. Please describe the composition of the Local VERP Advisory Committee and the role it will play in the program.
7. Tell us about your organization's experience with preventing evictions, providing housing and financial assistance and services to low-income households.
8. Please describe your organization's capacity to implement this pilot program.

9. Please describe the pilot program's management team.
10. Tell us about how your organization coordinates with other organizations to meet the needs of clients.
11. Tell us how you plan to measure the effectiveness of this program.

Attachments


There are a number of attachments required for the application. All attachments are listed on the attachment tab.

Please see the [**CAMS User Guide**](#) for more detailed instructions (file types and size limits).

Required application attachments include the following:

Application Attachments	
<i>Name of Attachment</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Implementation Timeline	A timeline from award date to full implementation
Policies and Procedure	If not finalized, please provide draft.
Assessment Tool	If not finalized, please provide draft.
Any MOUs, or Related Agreements	Attach all applicable to the pilot
Match Documentation	Board-approved match documentation required.
Advisory Committee	Please attach a list of members including (name and who they represent)
Optional Attachments	Applicant additional attachments

In some cases, CAMS will provide for only one attachment, such as Other Funding Documentation. This will require that the applicant save multiple sources of documentation as one document/file to upload.



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Application Setup

Select a Program: Housing Trust Fund (HTF) 2015 - 2017 and Subprogram: Competitive Loan Program
[To Subprogram](#)

Project and Budget Info | Narrative Information | **Attachments**

Enter Required Documents

Project Information | Project Budget | Narrative Information | **Attachments** | Additional Information

According to the program requirement, you must submit/upload following required documents:

Underwriting Template (required)
(to get the template file by clicking [HERE](#))
Browse...

Property Status and Location Documentation (required)
Browse...

Marketing/Demand Study or Needs Analysis
Browse...

Other Funding Documentation
Browse...

Applicant Financials (required)
Browse...

Timeline (required)
(to get the template file by clicking [HERE](#))
Browse...

Partner Commitment Documentation
Browse...

Additional Attachments
Browse...

Upload Attachments Instruction:

Preview Save

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Additional Information

The Additional Information tab allows the applicant to provide additional information not previously requested in the other sections of the application.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the DHCD CAMS Portal. The address bar shows the URL: <http://10.192.101.140/CAMSPortal/Applications/Application.aspx?App=356>. The page title is "DHCD CAMS Portal". The navigation bar includes links for Profile, Search Programs, Downloads, Apply, Application Status, View And Manage Projects, and User Guide. The main content area is titled "Application Submission" and includes a "Print" button. Below the title, there is a summary of application details: Application ID: 8805152012161518, Project Name: Test Budget webform kld 5/15/12, Program Name: Urgent Need, Application Start Date: 12/01/2011, and Application End Date: 10/31/2012. The "Additional Information" tab is selected, showing a text area for optional comments. A "Save" button is located at the bottom of the text area. The footer includes links for Contact Us, FAQ, and DHCD Site, along with the copyright notice "Copyright ©2012 DHCD".

Application Submission [Print](#)

Application ID: 8805152012161518 Project Name: Test Budget webform kld 5/15/12 Program Name: Urgent Need
Application Start Date: 12/01/2011 Application End Date: 10/31/2012

Project Information **Project Budget** **Narrative Information** **Attachments** **Additional Information**

Enter optional comments regarding your application in the space below:
You must click the "Save" button below to save the info you enter in the page!

[Save](#)

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Application Status

Applicants may allow multiple users to edit and review application materials. Please note that applicants are fully responsible for controlling security access to CAMS when the application is submitted to DHCD.

Once the applicant begins work on the application CAMS will save the application as Incomplete. The applicant may return repeatedly to CAMS to work on this application. Please be sure all work on the application is saved in CAMS. The application will remain as an incomplete application until the applicant chooses to submit the application. Once the application is submitted the status will change from Incomplete to Pending.

DHCD Review Process

Applicants with unresolved findings from previous DHCD monitoring, audit findings or other compliance issues will not be eligible for a funding commitment.

DHCD will conduct reviews of all applications submitted by eligible applicants through CAMS.